

**OFFICE OF DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY**  
**JAMES C. BACKSTROM**  
COUNTY ATTORNEY



Dakota County Judicial Center  
1560 Highway 55  
Hastings, Minnesota 55033-2392  
Phillip D. Prokopowicz, Chief Deputy  
Karen A. Schaffer, First Assistant  
Monica Jensen, Community Relations Director

Telephone  
(651) 438-4438  
FAX: (651) 438-4479 (Civil Division)  
FAX: (651) 438-4500 (Criminal Division)  
FAX: (651) 438-4499 (Juvenile/Admin Division)  
E-mail: attorney@co.dakota.mn.us

May 19, 2008

**NEWS RELEASE UPDATE**

**LAKEVILLE MOTHER IS SENTENCED IN DEATH OF HER DAUGHTER**

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom announced that Katherine Renae Bodem, age 38 of Lakeville, was sentenced today to 180 days in jail and 10 years probation by Judge Leslie Metzen in connection with the drowning death of her 11-month-old daughter on August 25, 2007 at their Lakeville home. The child drowned in a bathtub where she was left alone with another sibling for almost 20 minutes by her mother. Bodem pleaded guilty to two counts of Manslaughter in the Second Degree on May 6, 2008. Judge Metzen allowed Bodem to be released from jail during the day to care for her other children and to attend medical appointments. Judge Metzen also stayed the execution of the 48-month prison sentence which could be imposed in the future if Bodem does not follow the court's orders.

Facts of the case: Around 5:45 p.m. on August 25, 2007, Lakeville police received a 911 call indicating that a child was not breathing. Officers found Cecelia Bodem, age 11 months, unresponsive and not breathing, despite efforts by two neighbors who were performing CPR on the child. Tragically, Cecelia Bodem was unable to be revived and died. The victim's mother told police that she had left Cecelia and her 2-1/2 year-old brother alone in the bathtub while she went downstairs for a couple of minutes. She told officers that she could hear the children splashing the water and laughing and that when she could no longer hear the children, she called to them from downstairs. She told officers that when she did not get a response she returned to the upstairs bathroom where she found her son trying to pull Cecelia out of the tub. Bodem told police she hit the child on the back, blew two breaths into her mouth, at which time the infant vomited.

Officers later spoke with a 10-year-old daughter of Bodem who said that her mother put her 2-year-old brother and 11-month-old sister in the bathtub on the main level of the home for a bath and then went downstairs and began using the computer while the older daughter and her other two siblings played in the area. The older daughter said that she heard Cecelia crying upstairs at one point and shortly thereafter her 2-year-old brother came downstairs indicating that something was wrong. A forensic examination of Bodem's computer confirmed that for 19 minutes prior to the 911 call various websites and search engines were accessed to look for shoes. No other adult was present in the home at the time of this incident.

Backstrom commented: "This was a terrible tragedy that claimed the life of a young child. We are pleased that Ms. Bodem is being held accountable and that she will obtain the treatment that she needs to address her ongoing mental health problems which contributed to this crime."

If you have questions, contact James Backstrom at 651-438-4440.